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ZONE OF PEACE AND COOPERATION OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	3
II.	REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS	3
	A. Argentina	3
	B. Brazil	4
	C. Ecuador	5
	D. South Africa	5
	E. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7
III.	REPLIES RECEIVED FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM	7
	A. Department of Humanitarian Affairs	7
	B. Department of Public Information	7
	C. Economic Commission for Europe	9
	D. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	9
	E. International Maritime Organization	10

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CONTENTS (continued)

Page

F. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 10

G. United Nations Industrial Development Organization 12

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/18 of 27 November 1995 on a zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic in which, inter alia, it took note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/671) and requested the relevant organizations, organs and bodies of the United Nations system to render all appropriate assistance that States of the zone might seek in their joint efforts to implement the objectives of the zone. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to keep the implementation of its resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986 and subsequent resolutions on the matter under review and to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-first session, taking into account, inter alia, the views expressed by Member States.

2. Pursuant to the above resolution, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale dated 23 April 1996 to the Governments of the States Members of the United Nations, requesting their views on the implementation of the declaration on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. On the same day, letters were also dispatched to the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations, requesting them to submit their contributions for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General by 29 July 1996.

3. As of 30 September 1996, five Governments had replied and communications had been received from seven of the organizations and United Nations bodies addressed. Those replies are reflected in sections II and III of the present report. Any further replies received will be incorporated in an addendum to the report.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

A. Argentina

[Original: Spanish]

[17 July 1996]

1. The Argentine Republic welcomes the results achieved at the 4th meeting of the States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, held at Somerset West, South Africa, on 1 and 2 April 1996, which strengthen the importance of its role as a regional instrument for coordination and dialogue.

2. The documents adopted by consensus at that meeting incorporate various elements of great significance to the zone. In particular, Argentina wishes to draw attention to the following:

(a) The member countries' continued support for the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, together with the furtherance of democracy and political pluralism and the defence and promotion of human rights;

(b) Its continued commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the denuclearization of the South Atlantic;

(c) Cooperation and sharing of information with regard to the transport across the South Atlantic of highly radioactive materials, plutonium and highly radioactive nuclear waste;

(d) Recognition of the importance to the zone of the Agreement for the implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, adopted in New York on 4 August 1995; 1/

(e) The decision concerning cooperation against the demand, production and illicit traffic of narcotics and psychotropic substances.

3. The strengthening of the cooperation initiated, inter alia, in the above-mentioned areas will be valuable to the States members of the zone and, at the same time, will contribute to international peace and security. It is in this belief that the Argentine Republic will be pleased to welcome the fifth meeting of the members of the zone.

4. In conclusion, Argentina feels the need to emphasize once again, in the context of the South Atlantic, the persistence of the colonial situation of the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, in violation of the territorial integrity of the Republic. The normalization of bilateral relations with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the continuing efforts by Argentina to promote cooperation, its express desire to recover sovereignty by peaceful means and in accordance with the principles of international law and the commitment assumed in its Constitution to respect the way of life of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands have failed to achieve any progress towards solving the dispute concerning sovereignty over these South Atlantic territories as repeatedly called for by the United Nations.

B. Brazil

[Original: English]

[20 August 1996]

1. The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic represents a valuable asset for the South Atlantic countries of Africa and Latin America. The Brazilian Government has pledged its support to its revitalization and believes that there are three main areas that seem promising in that regard: denuclearization of the region, protection of the marine environment and cooperation in the fight against the scourge of drug trafficking.

2. Brazil intends to promote the strengthening of a total ban on nuclear weapons in the South Atlantic, through the integration of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) which, together with the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga) and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok), would rid the southern hemisphere of nuclear weapons.

3. The public commitment of the members of the zone to the protection of the marine environment has prompted Brazil to consider it both timely and convenient to adopt a specific convention on the issue, within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

4. The new convention would set up mechanisms for cooperation for the protection of the marine environment, for the conservation of marine living resources, for preventing and containing environmental accidents and for promoting both the exchange of information and concerted action in these areas.

5. Brazil is also strongly committed to cooperating with the other members of the zone in the fight against the scourge of drug trafficking. Along with other members of the zone, Brazil participated in the fourth meeting of the States members of the zone at Somerset West, near Cape Town, South Africa, on 1 and 2 April 1996. Brazil fully subscribes to the terms of the final declaration and the decisions on drug trafficking, protection of the marine environment and illegal fishing activities.

6. The Government of Brazil is committed to continued cooperation with the members of the zone and looks forward to the 5th meeting to be held in Argentina.

C. Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]

[7 June 1996]

The Government of Ecuador wishes to state that it supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution 41/11 declaring the South Atlantic a zone of peace and cooperation, because it believes that such actions contribute to the maintenance of world peace and security. Although Ecuador is not situated in that geographical region, it wishes to pledge in advance any cooperation within its means that may be required by the States of the Atlantic basin.

D. South Africa

[Original: English]

[14 August 1996]

1. South Africa has been privileged, as the newest member of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, to confirm its commitment to the purposes and objectives, and become a full participant in word and deed, of the zone.

2. As referred to in paragraph 10 of resolution 50/18 of 7 December 1995, the fourth meeting of States members of the zone was held at Somerset West, South Africa, on 1 and 2 April 1996. The meeting was hosted by the South African Minister for Foreign Affairs under the theme: "Bridging the South Atlantic".

3. The meeting emphasized the need for cooperation between States members on marine and maritime matters. It adopted decisions to develop practical measures for protection of the South Atlantic marine environment and on illegal fishing activities.

4. The need for the promotion of business, trade and investment between members across the Atlantic also received attention. The meeting encouraged the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) to promote cooperation.

5. The meeting decided to call for closer cooperation between States members and especially their law enforcement agencies, in dealing with the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The pandemic of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) was also discussed.

6. Participants welcomed the moves to democracy through the holding of elections in Benin and Sierra Leone and called upon parties to the peace process in Sierra Leone to redouble their efforts.

7. They expressed their concern about the question of the safe and secure transportation through the South Atlantic of irradiated nuclear fuels, plutonium and high-level radioactive wastes. They reiterated their wish to see progress towards the denuclearization of the South Atlantic and they noted that the various nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, such as the Treaty of Pelindaba, would contribute to making the southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons.

8. They expressed their conviction of the need for restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations body.

9. In conclusion, the meeting emphasized the role of regional and subregional integration in improving international competitiveness of national economies and in contributing to the development process. It encouraged States members further to investigate and implement means to facilitate business initiative in exploring and expanding economic cooperation and commercial links across the South Atlantic.

10. These enterprises were all considered within the context of enhancing South-South cooperation.

11. During its tenure as Chair, South Africa will endeavour to give tangible content to the above decisions, thereby reaffirming the validity of the zone as an instrument for promoting understanding and cooperation among South Atlantic countries, as well as for contributing to international peace and security. Certain issues are already being pursued and the Secretary-General will be kept informed.

12. South Africa in particular believes that the time is ripe to refocus the efforts of the zone on issues of common concern to the region and with potential benefit to all. South Africa welcomes indications that the economic and trade dimensions of the zone are being discovered and will receive increasing

attention, also at the 5th meeting that Argentina has offered to host. South Africa looks forward to involving itself in such initiatives.

E. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

[Original: English]

[9 August 1996]

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomes the objectives of the resolution, which are to promote peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic. In this regard, they wish to draw the Secretary-General's attention to developments in Anglo-Argentine relations which have contributed to the lessening of tension in the south-west Atlantic. In particular, cooperation exists in the forum of the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission that has contributed to the conservation of stocks, and in the field of military confidence-building measures under the interim reciprocal information and cooperation system. In September 1995, the United Kingdom and Argentina signed a joint declaration on oil exploration in the south-west Atlantic.

III. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. Department of Humanitarian Affairs

1. In Liberia, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been providing humanitarian assistance during the past six years of civil strife. Following the Abuja Agreement reached in August 1995, significant and successful efforts were made to expand humanitarian activities throughout the country.

2. In Angola, the United Nations sponsors a humanitarian assistance programme which comprises emergency relief and resettlement activities, supports demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and assists with mine clearance. These activities are geared to support the Lusaka Protocol signed in November 1994.

B. Department of Public Information

1. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/18 was highlighted by the Department of Public Information in its daily news programmes for broadcasting organizations worldwide, including the Radio Bulletin Board, and received emphasis in its press release service on 7 December 1995. United Nations information centres and services, particularly those located in the region, publicized the action taken by the General Assembly through their newsletters.

2. Questions relating to the purpose and objective of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic were the subject of five radio magazine

programmes produced in four languages and distributed to about 800 broadcasting organizations worldwide.

3. The Department released the supplemented reports of the Secretary-General on An Agenda for Development and on An Agenda for Peace (second edition). Among the titles published in the Blue Books Series were "The United Nations and Mozambique", "The United Nations and Human Rights, 1945-1995", "The United Nations and the Advancement of Women, 1945-1995" and a revised version, "The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996", and "The United Nations and the Iraq-Kuwait Conflict, 1990-1996" and "The United Nations and Rwanda, 1993-1996".

4. In addition, 78 publications, such as press kits, backgrounders, booklets, and newsletters - totalling 400,000 copies in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian - were produced and distributed relating to such issues as the United Nations role in Angola, the situation in Rwanda, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, review of Agenda 21, treaty on high seas fishing, the Commission on Sustainable Development, United Nations peacekeeping operations, the chemical weapons Convention, human rights, security questions in Central Africa, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

5. The news coverage service produced 400 press releases in English and French relevant to the issues emphasized in the resolution on a zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, as well as on meetings of intergovernmental bodies. Seventeen press releases dealt with Security Council meetings on resolving the conflicts in Haiti, Angola, Liberia, Burundi and Rwanda. These releases were transmitted, together with background notes and fact sheets, by both electronic mail and pouch to United Nations information centres and other offices of the United Nations system around the world, as well as through publicly accessible databases, such as Agora, APC, Gemnet and Togethernet and through UNDP gopher to Internet.

6. Through their newsletters, all United Nations information centres and offices have drawn attention to the efforts of the international community with regard to the establishment of a zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic and its objectives. Commemorations, such a United Nations Day, provided important opportunities for information centres and other United Nations field offices to bring to the attention of large audiences the activities of the United Nations role in Angola and Liberia, as well as the importance of major United Nations conferences and the interrelationship between them. The information centres at Asuncion, Buenos Aires, Dakar, Rio de Janeiro, Washington, D.C., and Windhoek, and the United Nations Information Service at Geneva, as part of their regular activities, have highlighted matters related to the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic in press briefings, meetings with non-governmental organizations, film screenings and through public inquiries.

7. The interrelationship between major United Nations conferences and the objectives of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic was the subject of 18 briefings given by the Department's non-governmental organization section for representatives of non-governmental organizations during the first half of 1996.

C. Economic Commission for Europe

In the light of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 50/18 and the mandate of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to assist developing countries of other regions, ECE stands ready to share its experience, particularly in transport of dangerous goods. ECE has developed excellent working relations with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and it could join forces in follow-up activities within its scope of expertise.

D. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. The activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) refer basically to the follow-up of the recommendations of the meetings of experts on the law of the sea of the States members of the zone, in the framework of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

2. Considering that meetings of this kind have not been convened since 1991, the contribution of ECLAC to the goals of the various General Assembly resolutions on the item has been focused on the transmission of pertinent documentation on its activities in the areas of interest for the zone, such as the law of the sea, the follow-up of the United Nations Convention on Environment and Development and the implementation of specific international conventions like the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their disposal.

3. In this connection, ECLAC has systematically remitted such documentation to Headquarters for submission to the coordinator of the zone, should it be deemed appropriate.

4. ECLAC would like to express its conviction of the need to revitalize mechanisms for the technical consultation among the States members of the zone, such as the former meetings on the law of the sea, since they represent suitable opportunities to look for efficient ways of assistance in the emerging challenges of sustainable development.

5. ECLAC feels that the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas provide adequate contexts to explore these possible ways of more active involvement with the objectives of the zone. In fact, the definition of some guidelines towards conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, is a clear challenge faced by coastal developing countries in the rational use of their marine resources.

6. ECLAC, together with the regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and with the sponsorship of the Government of Brazil, is convening a technical meeting of Latin American experts on the conservation and sustainable use of

coastal and marine biodiversity, to be held at Tamandare, State of Pernambuco, Brazil, between 7 and 11 October 1996, in which it is expected to produce a contribution for the third meeting of the conference of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to take place at Buenos Aires between 3 and 15 November 1996.

E. International Maritime Organization

1. If funds are available, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) can certainly assist within the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic to address the degradation of the marine environment resulting from sea-based activities and enhance their capacity to prevent and mitigate the impact of marine pollution, with particular emphasis on the implementation of internationally agreed standards for the protection of the marine environment. These include the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 (London, 1973), the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London, 1972) and the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (London, 1990). Also relevant in this connection are the IMO conventions dealing with liability and compensation for marine pollution (the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (Brussels, 1969), the Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Oil Pollution Damage, 1971, and their protocols.

2. IMO does not have funds of its own for technical cooperation activities but depends completely on the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other multilateral-bilateral donors for the necessary support. However, IMO will be ready to assist the countries concerned with the preparation of project proposals for funding by these organizations.

F. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission contribute to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/18, through the encouragement, promotion and support of regional cooperation among the countries of the region in the study and observations of the South Atlantic.

2. The Commission was founded in 1960 within UNESCO. The Commission serves the members of the United Nations family in their implementation of joint programmes relating to ocean research and observations. Some 125 countries are members of the Commission, including all countries of the South Atlantic region.

3. The purpose of the Commission is to promote marine scientific investigations and related ocean services, with a view to learning more about the nature and resources of the oceans through the concerted action of its members. The Commission, in accordance with its statutes, promotes scientific investigation of the oceans and application of the results thereof for the

benefit of all mankind and assists on request, member States wishing to cooperate to these ends. Activities are subject, in accordance with international law, to the regime for marine scientific research in zones under national jurisdiction.

4. Many countries of the South Atlantic region are already active in a number of international programmes coordinated by the Commission, including the study of the ocean in climate and global change, marine pollution, oceanographic data and information exchange, oceanographic observations and the study of the southern ocean.

5. In 1996, the Commission has continued its efforts to promote cooperation among the countries of the region particularly in developing a regional component of the Global Ocean Observing System initiated by the Commission in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization, UNEP and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in response to Agenda 21 of the United Nations Convention on Environment and Development and in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Establishment of such system requires close cooperation and partnership among the countries of the region in ocean observations, data exchange and products preparation required for all forms of maritime use. Present Commission efforts are aimed at strengthening national capacities of the countries of the region to enable them to participate in the existing operational elements of the Global Ocean Observing System in the region, particularly the regional components of the Global Sea Level Observing System, the Integrated Global Ocean Services System, the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel, the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange and more active involvement of the countries of the region in the Commission's southern ocean programme.

6. More than 20 countries in the South Atlantic region participate in the Global Sea Level Observing System by establishing and maintaining Global Sea Level Observing System sea level measuring stations. Within the framework of the Global Sea Level Observing System, the Commission's training course on sea level observations and analysis directed to the African and South American Portuguese and Spanish-speaking countries was organized by Brazil in 1993. A similar training workshop will be organized by Argentina in September 1996 for specialists of countries of South America. Through the Commission, assistance has been provided to some countries of West Africa in the provision and installation of sea level measuring stations.

7. Within the data buoy programme coordinated jointly by the Commission and WMO, an international South Atlantic buoy programme was initiated in 1994. Several countries in the region and outside of the region cooperate in establishing and maintaining a network of drifting buoys (30-40 buoys deployed monthly) in the South Atlantic in order to provide meteorological and oceanographic data required for operational and research purposes.

8. Several countries of the region and outside of the region cooperate in systematic oceanographic and marine meteorological observations from ships along the fixed lines in the South Atlantic within the joint Commission-WMO Integrated Global Ocean Services System programme.

9. Within the Commission's southern ocean programme, the first southern ocean forum will be organized by the Commission in September 1996 in Germany to review ongoing research and services programmes in the southern ocean (related to climate, living marine resources, marine pollution, ocean observations and data/information exchange) and to formulate proposals on future activities of the Commission in the region.

10. The capacity-building actions are part of all the Commission programmes and also constitute a separate programme called Training, Education and Mutual Assistance in the field of marine science and services in order to ensure that national and regional needs can be properly addressed.

G. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Although the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has no projects directly related to General Assembly resolution 50/18, some projects could possibly contribute indirectly to the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic as follows:

(a) Expert group meeting on cooperation on environmental management in iron and steel industry in African and Arab regions, (i) Pretoria, 3-6 July 1995; (ii) Cairo, 22-25 May 1995; and (iii) Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 10 and 11 October 1995;

(b) Interregional cooperation for the development and exchange of experience between Arab, African, Latin American and Asian iron and steel associations;

(c) Preparation of a recovery and recycling project in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Namibia and Senegal;

(d) Various regional and interregional cleaner production activities;

(e) Visit of the Secretary of the Treaty for Cooperation in Amazonia project.

Notes

1/ A/CONF.164/37; see also A/50/550, annex I.